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SCIENCE AND ART DEPARTMENT.

THE SPEECH OF HENRY COLE, C.B.,
SECRETARY OF THE SCIENCE & ART
DEPARTMENT, AND DIRECTOR OF
THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM,
NOTICE
DELIVERED AT THE DISTRIBUTION
BY HIM, OF THE PRIZES TO THE
NOTTINGHAM SCHOOL OF ART,

THE XV. DAY OF JANUARY,

M D C C C L X X I I I .

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SCIENCE AND ART DEPARTMENT
THE SPEECH OF HENRY COLE, C.B.
SECRETARY OF THE SCIENCE & ART
DEPARTMENT, AND DIRECTOR OF THE
NOTICE.

On the 15th January 1873 the Annual Distribution of Prizes to the successful students of the Nottingham School of Art took place in the large hall of the Mechanics' Institution, the distribution being made by Mr. Henry Cole, C.B., of the South Kensington Museum. There was a very large attendance. The chair was taken by Lord Belper, the Lord Lieutenant of the County, and among those present were Lady Belper, Mr. and Mrs. C. Paget, Colonel Wright, Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Webb, the Mayor (Mr. W. Foster), the ex-Mayor (Mr. W. G. Ward), Mrs. Ward, and Miss Ward, Mr. Ald. Oldknow, the Town Clerk (Mr. S. G. Johnson), Mr. Councillor Starey, Mr. H. Wright. Mr. Saul Isaac, Mr. S. D. Walker, Mr. Bradshaw, Mr. W. Chapman, Mr. J. S. Rawle (Head Master), etc.

Lord Belper introduced Mr. Cole, who after his speech distributed the prizes. Mr. Rawle, Mr. Ward the late Mayor, Mr. Starey, Mr. W. F. Webb, and Mr. Paget in their respective speeches all advocated the foundation of a permanent Museum of Science and Art.

Lord Belper, in returning thanks for the vote of thanks given to him, said "I rejoice to hear of a scheme which has been set on foot to render the Museum already in existence permanent in the town, and I am glad to find that so far as this meeting is concerned it has received universal support. It is an undertaking which ought first to be taken up by the Municipality of Nottingham, and were they once to put their shoulders to the wheel to promote that object, he trusted and believed that their efforts would be cordially responded to by the county."

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which has passed the Municipalities in London for
this is the first time since the beginning of the century
the number of your Municipalities has increased to 100. You have
now 100,000 people in the 100 Municipalities of London.
This is no doubt a great increase of population, but
I have no figures to prove this increase. I can only
say that I see no other cause of such a great increase
but the increase of the number of Municipalities. I see in
London, now only one of the Municipalities, the same
going forward to the town where the Metropolitan
extension of the town. You have a present
population of 1,000,000 people. Your town has
now passed a little physical improvement by a late
town you much distinguished you are in this respect. A very large

SPEECH OF HENRY COLE.

Mr. Cole spoke as follows :—*

MY LORD, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN,—This time last year I engaged to perform the duty I am about to do on this occasion, but was prevented by imperative official business from fulfilling my engagement. Had I been present I should have ventured to make a few observations to you on the position in which Nottingham stood with regard to art and the especial fitness of the Town for establishing a Museum of Science and Art. I am particularly happy in not having to talk about an anticipation, but rather of a performance which has been amply fulfilled.

Nottingham has now its Museum of Science and Art, which is the beginning of something much greater in the future. As I entered the ante-room, a gentleman of Nottingham was kind enough to observe to me “ You will not forget that in old times, we were distinguished for cock-fighting and prize-fighting, whereas, at present, we are distinguished for cricketing and rifle-shooting ; and we hope you will make out a good case for our being now distinguished in Art.” Last year I wrote to the then Mayor, a letter excusing my absence, and saying that I thought Nottingham was pre-eminently fitted for having a Museum of Art and Science, and I grounded that opinion upon the fact that yours is really a most distinguished town in modern civilization, though you perhaps may not be so much aware of it as strangers are, and—I say it without compliment—you have a remarkable Municipality. You have a Municipality

*This speech has been revised by the reports of the meeting given in the *Nottingham Guardian*, the *Nottingham Express*, and the *Nottingham Journal*.

which has beaten the municipal attempts in London hollow, and as far as I know, after some general experience of the country, there is no Municipality which is performing its duty in like manner to your Municipality of Nottingham. You have had to pay for it, as we have to pay for every good thing in this world. I see on all sides matters to prove my assertion. I have before me a glass of water clearer than we can get in London, from any one of a dozen water companies. I see in going through the town what the Municipality has done for the recreation of the people. You have a beautiful Arboretum, you have a Free Library supported by rates;—you may not know how much distinguished you are in that respect. Very few towns in England have Free Libraries. We cockneys have been trying for 25 years to get Free Libraries almost unsuccessfully. The only place in all London where rates support a Free Library is at Westminster, where I have heard that a Lord Chancellor in his earlier days, actually packed a meeting to ensure a majority for that Library. Then in Nottingham you have a distinguished Volunteer Corps which, as my friend told me, has gained more prizes for its shooters than any in England. In addition to that, I have looked around, and seen some remarkable specimens of modern Architecture, in which the Gothic and Italian styles seem to have reconciled their differences, and produced something new and refreshing. I think that Nottingham is distinguished for its modern Architecture, and is superior to many neighbouring towns. I hope your Lordship will not think me wrong in saying that Nottingham is more distinguished in this respect than Derby. Leicester is a long way behind as compared with Nottingham. Then there is your School of Art—which, in some points, is the very first school in the country. It is certainly the cleanest, best kept, and arranged, and I can show by figures that it occupies a high position in the work it does. There is a system at work throughout the country, by which masters of Schools of Art get prizes according to the work done in the schools each year—the first prize being 50*l.*, the next 40*l.*, and then 30*l.*, and so on. Well, this system has been in operation five years, and I find that in that period, among 120 schools in the United Kingdom, Nottingham has taken masters' prizes every year. I need not trouble you with any decimal calculations, but it is a fact that Nottingham has earned far more public money for masters' prizes than its average share. With regard to the students there are 120 schools competing for the State Medals—gold, silver, and bronze. Gold medals have been given away for seven years, and there are not

more than 10 gold medals given every year. The 70 medals that have been given away have been competed for by 120 schools, the average being less than one medal per school, and of the 70 medals Nottingham has gained no less than six. In fact, the medals taken by Nottingham—and no doubt your skill in cock-fighting, prize-fighting, cricketting, and rifle shooting, have something to do with the result—have been eight times the average of the schools of the whole kingdom.

All these facts make me think that Nottingham may take the lead in the country in establishing a Museum of Science and Art, and in setting an example to other towns in England. I regret to state that in this matter England is behind continental countries; you cannot go from London to Paris without alighting on several Museums of this kind. At Boulogne, Arras, Calais, Amiens, Beauvais, Rouen, you find Museums and Picture Galleries. How many are there between Dover and London? The various facts I have mentioned justify me in asking you to consider the question of establishing a permanent Museum of Science and Art. The man who was your last Mayor, with energy and tact brought the subject before the Town Council, and I am glad to say there was not a single dissentient voice, when he proposed to use the Exchange Rooms, so that there was not a division in the Council upon the question. The result is that you have got a Museum. The establishment of a permanent Museum of Science and Art is a necessary complement to the work which you have already done. The Department has rules and directions which have been circulated for a number of years, which everybody can buy for 6d., but which nobody reads—and by those rules, towns have been given the opportunity of borrowing articles purchased by the taxation money, and deposited at South Kensington. I am sorry to say that the country at large takes too little heed comparatively, of that advantage. But your Town Council have secured an Art Museum, and in this matter Nottingham has done its part bravely and well. I am told that the Police Court has been actually moved to make room for the Museum. I strongly sympathise with the gentleman who raised his voice against that change. I hope that he will not stand it, but will have the Court back again—not, however, by turning out the Museum, until it is provided with a suitable place. I am told the ladies do not consider that there is a floor fit to dance on in Nottingham except the Exchange Rooms, and, to a certain extent, they have been put out. I say to them, "Do not stand it; have the rooms

back again," with the reservation that a suitable place shall be provided elsewhere without loss of time.

Many agencies must concur together to establish a successful Museum of Science and Art. Municipalities, voluntary payments, loans of objects being private property, and lastly, aid from the public taxation voted by Parliament. The Municipality must take the lead and find management and responsibility. The House of Commons aids by grants for building (if connected with a School of Science and Art), and by loan of objects from the Kensington Museum, which have been bought by the money of Nottingham and all parts of the kingdom. Another important step is to get a voluntary system of public contributions. Now I can compliment Nottingham upon this matter. The inhabitants have shown a singular appreciation of their Museum of Science and Art. The inhabitants have flocked in thousands to the Museum in the Exchange Rooms, until it might be said that the whole population had passed through it. Since last Whitsuntide 80,000 persons have visited the Museum. What a contrast this affords to the attendance of Londoners at the South Kensington Museum, the National Gallery, and British Museum! The total number who have visited your Museum since it was first opened in May to the 31st December is 78,382—by payment of a penny, 57,000 odd; by payment of 3d., 9,000; and by payment of 6d., 4,700; and it should be noted that the penny realized double what the 3d. and the 6d. did. In my opinion it is far better to have the payment of 1d. than to have a free entrance. The Museum is much more valued by reason of a small payment, which turns away nobody able to appreciate it. The pence furnish a perfect test of appreciation. I must say a word on private loans of objects. It is an unexceptionable method which enables the rich to help the poor. There is no demoralization as in many forms of charity. You teach respect for property by such loans. They act as a spark to light up latent genius. They even instruct the purchasers of works of art, and excite emulation among them. What an example in this matter has been set by the Queen, the Prince Consort, and followed universally—Sir Richard Wallace becoming a marked benefactor! Through his aid, Bethnal Green Museum has become a splendid Museum of Science and Art, containing objects valued at £2,000,000 sterling. When the idea of establishing it was made known, it was stated that the valuables would be greatly damaged by the rough people who inhabit that part of the metropolis. I was cautioned

not to put up a majolica fountain out of doors. The greatest local authority cautioned me, but I trusted the poor people, and I am glad to say that there has not been any damage done, on the contrary, that the people have shown great appreciation of the institution, and respect for it.

I think I have made out a case which may commend itself to your judgment. Your Museum has been a great and pronounced success in all respects—except its size. It is quite clear that the present room is too small. It is quite insufficient: in fact it ought to be twice the size properly to accommodate the objects displayed on its walls. Moreover, the ladies are dissatisfied because they cannot have the room to dance in, and the magistrates are, you must bear in mind, deprived of their rights in respect of the old police court. But you do not wish to get rid of this Museum. I am sure you are prepared to maintain it. I think the time has now come when you should show your appreciation of the institution by taking up the matter and enlarging the scope of the Museum. You must keep in view the idea of Science and Art. You must add Science to Art in your permanent Museum. Now in Nottingham, you are going to take up the question of Public Health, and I would ask you what is more necessary in finding out the causes of disease than Science? I find also that the inhabitants of the town are going to get rid of the filth of the town and neighbourhood, by means of better sewerage. The Egyptians had as one of their thirty-six commandments, "Thou shalt not pollute the rivers." I think this will soon be an eleventh Commandment which England must adopt before long. This being the case, it is your duty to get the best Science you can in order to get the best results. Although in the town you are well supplied with water, you have to pay dearly for gas. If you were sufficiently well acquainted with the laws of Science you would be spared an expense of six or seven thousand a year. The officer of health, whom it is proposed to appoint, ought to be attached to a School of Science. I desire to impress upon you the desirability of including the cultivation of Music in such an establishment. There has lately been a little chaffing going on in high quarters about fiddles, and a discussion if they were as scientific as Steam Engines. In my opinion, Music unites in the highest degree both Science and Art.

I have taken trouble to look about for what would be a good site for your permanent Museum, and the conviction in my mind

is that you have a site already prepared—one where the Museum would act as a beacon to all the Midland counties—and that site is the Castle. If you do what you can with the Castle, it will be one of the very finest things in all England. I am told the Trustees of the Castle were quite willing to help you, and I have already seen a plan and design by Mr. Hine, that has been made for building up the Castle again, and preserving the old building, which is attributed to that distinguished architect Inigo Jones. Mr. Hine is an architect to whom Nottingham owes much of its originality and beauty. Is Nottingham ready to assist in an operation of this kind? I have strong faith that it will. There will be some difficulties in the way; there is nothing in the world without difficulty. In the Bible there is a maxim which I recommend your Municipality to take to heart, “There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.” You have got a number of good things, but if your most excellent Municipality had not scattered wisely in the Free Library, the pleasure grounds, in getting water, etc., the poverty of the Town would have been much greater than it is now.

We are now living in a period of the world of great transition. As far as I know history, we are living in a period of the world very much unlike any other period. Everything is known and discussed, and everybody may start on his own pulpit and preach what he likes. Churches and chapels are rising, and you know that

Wherever God erects a house of prayer,
The devil's sure to build a chapel there;
And 'twill be found upon examination,
The devil has the larger congregation.

I am afraid there are more devil's chapels than God's chapels. One way, I believe, in meeting the devil in this encounter is by a Museum of Science and Art, and I shall be much surprised if the clergy do not think so. I am looking forward to the time when, as well as having a Hospital Sunday in Nottingham you will have a Museum Sunday. This will be defeating Satan by an indirect process. Religion will co-operate again with Fine Art I am sure.

In another generation every one will be able to read, and I hope read his Bible, until Heaven sends another revelation. I trust too that every one will practise Music and be able to sing praises to the Lord of Heaven.

Your Robin Hood Rifleman affords evidence that instead of hired mercenaries for a national army, every man will be as good as his forefather in the days of the greatest of the English kings—King Alfred—and out of patriotism give his personal services to defend his country from invasion. Nay, I even believe that the science of political economy, will discover the means how to give the agricultural labourer as good a house over his head, as comfortable a bed to lie upon, plenty of as good food to eat, and such proper covering for his body, as a cart-horse worth fifty pounds now gets.

I don't believe such conservative progress is visionary, and with it Schools of Science and Art will multiply. Every centre of 10,000 people will have its Museum, as England had its Churches far and wide in the 13th century. The churches in the 13th century, were the receptacles of all kinds of art work. Every church had its paintings, sculpture, metal decoration, architecture, music, and was in fact a Museum.

The taste of England will revive, although with different manifestations. It will not be the revival of fine art producing solitary works like a Gloucester Candlestick, or St. Patrick's Bell, or a Lynn Cup, but repetitions of hundreds of thousands of copies of works of Art-Manufacture, to be used by all classes of the people. I must intrude the remark that I do not think it right to decry the present English modern taste. It is as good as modern taste is anywhere in Europe; better I think, than is now existing in France, or Germany, or Italy. Modern English taste is less epicurean and sensual, than modern French taste, less frigid than modern German, and more masculine than Italian taste.

As Nottingham is the first town which I may congratulate on establishing a permanent Museum of Science and Art; as it is the first place in which I have had the honour of preaching faith in the establishment of permanent museums of Science and Art, so it shall be the place where I will make my last dying speech and confession as an officer of the public. This is the last occasion on which I shall address a public meeting in an official capacity, and trouble you with a few personal observations.

Next April, I shall have completed my fifty years of public service, from which it is my intention to retire. More than twenty years ago, Lord Granville, then Vice-President of

the Board of Trade, asked me to undertake the superintendence of the Schools of Design. During that period I have served under statesmen of all politics ;—Mr. Labouchere, afterwards Lord Taunton ; Mr. Henley, who was the first to insist that the artisans of this country should have means of learning geometrical drawing ; Mr. Cardwell, who enlarged the Department of Art into Science and Art ; Lord Stanley of Alderley, who transferred the Museum from Marlborough House to the South Kensington Museum, then already founded by the Prince Consort ; the late Marquess of Salisbury, who instituted the present successful system of Science instruction ; Earl Granville, who first began the permanent buildings for the South Kensington Museum, and started the idea of the Bethnal Green Museum, which his successor the Duke of Buckingham, carried into practical effect, the Duke also causing the new Science Schools to be built ; and the Duke of Marlborough, who induced Mr. Disraeli's government to make the most liberal and profitable investments of public money, in purchasing works of art. It is a comfort to me, in my retirement, that I leave the work I have so dearly loved going on under the Parliamentary protection of the Marquess of Ripon and Mr. Forster, who, I hope will allow me to say, are hearty promoters of Education, Science, and Art among the people.

Since the year 1852, I have witnessed the conversion of twenty limp Schools of Design into one hundred and twenty flourishing Schools of Art in all parts of the United Kingdom, and other schools like them, in the Colonies and the United States. Five hundred night classes for drawing have been established for artisans. One hundred and eighty thousand boys and girls are now learning elementary drawing. Twelve hundred and fifty Schools and Classes for Science instruction have spontaneously sprung up. The South Kensington Museum has been securely founded as a National Centre for consulting the best works of Science and Art, and as a Storehouse for circulating objects of Science and Art throughout the Kingdom. Whilst this Museum itself has been visited by more than twelve millions of visitors, it has circulated objects to one hundred and ninety-five localities holding exhibitions, to which more than four millions of local visitors have contributed above ninety-three thousand pounds.

I hope still to be able to prosecute my work as a volunteer, and assist the establishment of Local Museums, which may draw their supply from South Kensington.

I hope also to do my part in establishing firmly Annual International Exhibitions of Industry, as a permanent institution, relying not on State aid, but on the voluntary support of an educated people, and showing a yearly competitive examination of the practical fruits of the working of the National Schools of Science and Art.

As last words, I venture to say to Nottingham, "Show the world, in the International Exhibition of 1874, what the School of Art has enabled your industry to accomplish in Lace. Let Nottingham enlarge on its Castle walls, its present admirable Museum of Science and Art, not forgetting a School of Music, which is both Science and Art. Any services I can render to the work will be freely given, and I think I may promise, when I drop my official chains, I will do my best to help Governments and Parliaments to appreciate the desires of the country to have Local Museums, and especially to do justice to Nottingham, in return for the bright example it has set to all other towns, in founding by the aid of its Municipality, by the voluntary payments of its inhabitants and the encouragement of the State—the aid of all being essential—the first permanent Municipal Museum of Art, Science, and local Industry.

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